

Montana Department of Military Affairs
Disaster & Emergency Services Division
State Emergency Coordination Center

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Situation Report for Saturday, July 26, 2003 (issued @ 14:00 hrs.)

Wildfires of 2003

Attention * - New information shown in today's report displayed in ***Bold Italics*** type.

I. - **Background Information:**

- Fire activity throughout the state continues to generate concern on the part of many Montana citizens and lots of work for local government officials. Worsening fire/weather conditions and a lack of available resources continue taxing "initial attack" resources around the state. Fire managers are gearing-up for what could easily become another long summer siege (possibly rivaling that of 2000).

II. - **Current Montana Fire Conditions:** (as reported to NRCC ***July 25, 2003 (2230)***)

Light initial attack – 24 new fires for 13,089 acres

- ***Flathead Area Command (Mann) has been ordered to manage large fires on the Flathead National Forest and Glacier National Park.***
- ***Robert – Type 1 Incident Management Team (Stam) will assume command at 2400 on 7/25, 3,200 acres, 0% contained, 8 miles N of Columbia Falls, Montana.***
- ***Wedge Canyon – Type 2 Incident Management Team (Sandman), 15,000 acres, 5% contained, 20 miles E of Eureka, Montana.***
- ***Trapper Creek Complex - Fire Use Team (Cook), 16,270 acres, 30% contained, This Complex is made up the Trapper Creek (14,440 acres), Paul Bunyan (300 acres) and Wolf Gun (1,530 acres) fires located 45 statute miles NE of Kalispell, MT.***
- ***Black Frog Complex - Type 1 Incident Management Team (Frye), 7,938 acres, 15% contained. This Complex is made up of the Blackwall fire (4,966 acres), located 32 miles N of Salmon, Idaho and Frog Pond (2,972 acres), located 34 miles S of Hamilton, Montana.***
- ***Missouri Breaks Complex - Type 2 Incident Management Team (Gray), 130,927***

acres, 95% contained. This Complex is made up of the Big Coulee (29,494 acres), Ghost Coulee (959 acres – 100% contained), Germaine (66,515 acres) and Indian (33,959 acres) fires. Complex located 35 miles NW of Jordan, Montana.

- *Hidden Lake – Type 2 Incident Management Team (Chrisman), 3,500 acres, 15% contained, 30 miles W of Dillon, Montana.*
- *Ross Creek – 142 acres, 30% contained, 20 air miles SW of Troy, Montana.*
- *Big Creek – Type 2 Incident Management Team (Swope), 1,339 acres, 50% contained, 4 miles NW of Victor, Montana.*
- *Little Salmon Creek Complex – This 200 acre Wildland Fire Use complex is located 47 miles SE of Kalispell, Montana in the Bob Marshall Wilderness. This complex is being managed to accomplish resource objectives. A Fire Use Management Team has been ordered.*
- *Slim Sam – 134 acres, 100% contained, 10 miles W of Townsend, Montana.*
- *Long Mountain – 160 acres, 100% contained, 2 miles E of Neihart, Montana.*
- *Kelsey – 100 acres, 100% contained, 40 miles SW of Miles City, Montana.*

STATE FORECAST FOR MONTANA
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
426 PM MDT FRI JUL 25 2003

WEST OF THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE

Today - partly cloudy. Slight chance of showers and Thunderstorms. Highs 83 to 93.
Tonight - partly cloudy. Slight chance of showers and Thunderstorms. Lows 46 to 56.
Sunday - mostly sunny. Highs 83 to 93.

CENTRAL MONTANA

Today - partly cloudy. Slight chance of rain showers in the Morning then slight chance of showers and thunderstorms in the Afternoon. Highs in the mid 70s to mid 80s.
Tonight. Partly cloudy in the evening then clearing. Slight Chance of showers and thunderstorms in the evening. Lows in the Lower to mid 50s.
Sunday...mostly sunny. Highs in the 80s.

SOUTHWEST MONTANA

Today - partly cloudy. Slight chance of showers and Thunderstorms. Highs in the lower 70s to lower 80s.
Saturday night - partly cloudy. Slight chance of showers and Thunderstorms in the evening. Lows in the mid 40s to lower 50s.
Sunday. Partly cloudy. Highs in the mid 70s to mid 80s.

EASTERN AND SOUTHERN MONTANA

Today - mostly cloudy with a chance of thunderstorms south. Partly cloudy north. Highs from the mid 80s to lower 90s.

Tonight - partly cloudy with a chance of thunderstorms early. Lows from the mid 50s west to lower 60s east.

Sunday - mostly sunny. Highs from the mid 80s to lower 90s.

III. - Summary of Actions being taken by Local Government Officials:

Local government resources from various jurisdictions have been actively engaged in fire fighting efforts, particularly during the past several days. The evacuation of residents whose properties have been threatened have been conducted as required.

• Local Emergency and Disaster Declarations **Date Filed**

Cascade County	Emergency Declaration (Box Canyon/Long Mtn.)	7/15/03
Garfield County	Disaster Declaration (Missouri Breaks)	7/15/03
Beaverhead County	Emergency Resolution (multiple fires)	7/17/03
Ravalli County	Emergency Declaration (Big Creek)	7/20/03
Flathead County	Emergency Declaration (Wedge Canyon)	7/21/03
Sanders County	Resolution (Level I Fire Restrictions)	7/17/03

• Fire Restrictions and Closures **Effective Date**

Northwestern Zone	Stage I Restrictions	July 21, 2003
Southwestern Zone	Stage I Restrictions	July 23, 2003
Central Montana Zone	Stage I Restrictions	July 18, 2003
South Central Zone	Stage I Restrictions	July 18, 2003
Eastern Montana Zone	Stage I Restrictions (Billings)	July 18, 2003
	Stage I Restrictions (Lewistown)	July 21, 2003
	None (Miles City)	N/A

IV. - Summary of State Activities and Resources Committed:

State Declaration:

On 7/18/03, Governor Judy Martz signed an Executive Order (# 14-03) in which she declared a statewide emergency thereby enabling mobilization of state resources

(including the Montana National Guard) should they be needed to help protect the life, health and/or property of Montana's citizens.

FEMA Declarations:

FEMA Fire Management Assistance Declaration approved on July 23rd, 2003 for Missouri Breaks Complex fire. DNRC is contemplating a request for a FEMA Fire Management Assistance Declaration for Flathead, Sanders, Lake, and Lincoln Counties.

FEMA Fire Management Assistance Declaration approved on July 25th, 2003 for Flathead County's Wedge Canyon and Roberts fires.

Requests for State Assistance:

- Montana DES is supplying two individuals to Garfield County serving as Agency Representatives, assisting with disaster recovery efforts. In response to the threat posed by the Missouri Breaks Complex, last evening a third MT-DES Agency Representative was deployed to work directly with Petroleum County officials.
- On July 23rd, FEMA announced the approval of Montana DNRC's request for federal fire management assistance to help fight the Missouri Breaks Complex fires. This authorization makes FEMA funding available to pay 75% of the state's eligible fight fighting expenses.
- The Montana National Guard is assisting "initial attack" fire suppression operations by supplying 3 UH-60 (Blackhawk) Helicopters modules and approximately 20 people. One helicopter is currently assigned to the Flathead Interagency Dispatch Center, another is assigned to the Helena Interagency Dispatch Center, and the third is assigned to Missoula.
- Third helicopter module resource order was filled on 24 July 03 for assignment out of Missoula.

Status of State Emergency Coordination Center (SECC)

- Montana DES is providing support to local governments through the State Emergency Coordination Center in Helena. The SECC is operating at Activation Level III with extended hours (0700-1900 every day).
- The State Emergency Coordination Center (SECC) will continue to monitor conditions and is prepared to provide 24-hour incident support to local governments. After office hours (i.e., 1900-0700) support is available through the DES Duty Officer who may be reached at (406) 841-3911.

Road Closures: Information is current as of 07/25/03

Southwest

Montana Highway 43 and U.S. 93, closed recently because of the Black Frog fire complex, will reopen at noon Friday, July 25. The roads will close again at 9 p.m. Friday, and then be open from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., daily for the foreseeable future, officials said. Forest Service officials have closed the Gibbonsville Road from where it enters the Salmon-Challis National Forest to where it leaves the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest.

Northwest

The Wedge Canyon fire, 6-miles south of the Canadian boarder, and the Robert fire, between Coram and West Glacier, are actively requiring the continued closure of Secondary 486 to all but essential traffic.

Reported Major Fire Activity: *

Black Frog Complex:

Residences threatened: 75	Commercial Property: 1	Outbuildings/Other: 10
Estimated Cost: \$2,030,000	% contained: 10%	

Robert Fire:

Residences threatened: 100	Commercial Property: 24	Outbuildings/Other: 36
Estimated Cost: \$	% contained: 0	

Wedge Canyon:

Residences threatened: 100	Commercial Property: 0	Outbuildings/Other: 0
Estimated Cost: \$2,100,000	% contained: 5%	

Missouri Breaks Complex:

Residences Threatened:	Commercial Property:	<i>Outbuildings/Other: 8</i>
Estimated Cost: <i>\$2,400,000</i>	% contained: <i>95%</i>	<i>Total structures lost: 8</i>

*Information reported from DES situation reports to SECC.

Daily Fire Summary

LO	FIRE NAME	CAUSE	AGENCY	COUNTY/ UNIT	SIZE (acres)	% CONTAIN	IC	COST	REMARKS
CLO	Hidden Lake	L	USFS	B-DNF	3,500	15%	T2 Chrisman	1.4 M	
ELO									County & BLM Initial Attack
NELO	Missouri Breaks Complex	L		DNRC/Garfield Co/ BLM/FWS	131,000	95%	T2 Grey, Buhre RFC, Rooney Line Off	2.4 M	23 residences/61 outbldgs threatened, 1 outbldg destroyed; livestock may have been lost. FEMA declaration approved. 1 residence, few outbldgs lost.
	Basin		co assist	Wheatland Co	2,500		Tim Crosmer		
NWLO	Wedge Canyon	L	USFS	Flathead	15,000	5%	Sandman T2 and Bennett T1	3.0 M	Wales Cr to Canadian border under evac order, 100 residences threatened. no new acreage report
	Roberts		USFS	Flathead	3,200	0%	T1 Stams		
	Trapper Cr Complex FLATHEAD AREA COMMAND - MANN		GNP		16,250	30%			
SLO									
SWLO	Big Creek			USFS/BNF	1,339	50%	Swopes T2	1.2 m	Jon Hayes RFC; Cathy Bitterroot Dispatch
	Black-Frog Complex			USFS/BNF	8,000	15%	T1 Frye	2.0 m	Montana portion of Blackwall & Frog Pond combined; SWLO & CLO will communicate on this fire.